

ARIZONA ROCKHOUND INFORMATION*Circular No. 92, July, 2005, revised 8-06 version 1.2*

by Diane Bain

The Department receives numerous requests for information on visiting Arizona's mines and mineral collecting sites. The following brief compilation lists sites for mine tours, mine overviews, gold panning areas, mineral museums, and a list of publications on mineral collecting.

We encourage you to visit the Arizona Mining & Mineral Museum. After viewing the excellent mineral collection, the Museum's reference materials may be used to obtain further information on mineral collecting in Arizona. **Field trip guides** to some of the State's many other collecting areas may be reviewed and/or photocopied. Information on mines and mining may also be obtained from the Department's staff and library.

For those interested in joining a rock and gem club, a circular entitled *Earth Science Clubs in Arizona* is available, as well as *Arizona Gem Shows*, a listing of all of the mineral shows each year. These are also on the Department website.

ROCKHOUNDING ON BLM LAND

Rockhounding in Arizona, a brochure produced by the Bureau of Land Management, summarizes the regulations for rockhounding on public lands. Briefly, the regulations state that:

"You may collect reasonable amounts of specimens. In Arizona, BLM sets the 'reasonable' limits for personal use as up to 25 pounds per day, plus one piece, with a total limit of 250 pounds per year."

This brochure is available from any BLM office, including the State office at 1 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85004, 602-417-9200.

Specific rockhounding areas are profiled at the BLM website, including Burro Creek Campground Area northeast of Wickenburg, the Black Hills Rockhound Area northeast of Safford, and the Round Mountain Rockhound Area southeast of Safford. www.az.blm.gov/rockhnd.htm

OPERATING MINE TOURS**Bagdad**

Bagdad Mine. An operating, open pit copper/molybdenum mine operated by Phelps Dodge and dating from the 19th century. The mine is located 2 hours northwest of Phoenix. Free tours by appointment. 928-633-3490.

Tucson

Mission Mine One-hour tours of Asarco's operating, open-pit copper mine. 15 miles south of Tucson on I-19 and Pima Mine Road. Admission fee. The Mineral Discovery Center is free. Tour reservation: 520-625-8233, Recorded information: 520-625-7513

www.mineraldiscovery.com

Morenci**Morenci Mine**

Two hour bus tours of one of the largest open-pit mines in the world. Tours are offered Fridays and Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Reservations are required. Admission fee. Call toll-free: 1-877-646-8687

<http://www.phelpsdodge.com/Community-Environment/MorenciMineTour.htm>

OPERATING-MINE OVERLOOKS**Morenci Overlook**

Located in eastern Arizona, about an hour drive northeast of Safford on the scenic Coronado Trail, this site provides a spectacular view of Arizona's largest mining operation - the Phelps Dodge Morenci mine. The Morenci mine, the largest copper mine in the US, produces over 750 million pounds of copper a year and has moved over 1,000,000 tons of ore in a day! The overlook is about 5 miles north of the town of Morenci on Highway 191.

Ray Overlook

Approximately 85 miles east of Phoenix is the Asarco-owned Ray Mine, a major copper producer. Mining operations and equipment may be viewed here daily from 7:00 am to 2:00 pm. The overlook is located approximately 12 miles south of Superior on Highway 177.

HISTORIC MINES

Aguila

Robson's Mining World. An old-time gold mining town offers an impressive collection of antique mining equipment, gold panning, bed and breakfast, and restaurant. Admission fee. Oct. 1 –May 1, Mon - Fri, 10:00 am-4:00 pm, Sat, Sun 8:00 am-6:00 pm,. Six miles north of Aguila on Hwy 71. 928-685-2609

Bisbee

Copper Queen Underground Tour and Lavender Pit Tour. Tours are available of the famous Copper Queen Mine and a large open-pit copper mine at the colorful, historic mining town of Bisbee. Historic mining equipment still in place. Admission fee. Open 7 days a week. One-hour tours begin at 10:30, 12:00, 2:00, and 3:30. 520-432-2071

<http://www.cityofbisbee.com/queenminetours.htm>

Oatman

Gold Road. Located in Arizona's richest gold district, San Francisco, during the 1990's the Gold Road mine produced nearly 100,000 ounces of gold. Closed since 1998, it now offers 4 levels of tours. Admission fee. Located 2.5 miles east of Oatman on Route 66. 928-768-1600
www.goldroadmine.com

Wickenburg

Vulture Mine Camp This famous mine was discovered in 1863 by Henry Wickenburg. Take US60 from Wickenburg about 3 miles to the west, turn left at the Vulture Mine Road at the Safeway shopping center and continue on paved road for about 12 miles. For more information call 602-859-2743.

<http://www.jpc-training.com/pg06.htm>

GOLD PANNING

Lake Pleasant Park

Gold panning is allowed in the park, but not metal detecting or rockhounding. There is a nominal entrance fee. Twenty miles northwest of Phoenix on Castle Hot Springs Road.

www.maricopa.gov/rec_svc/lake_pleasant/#133

Lynx Lake Area

This area has been set aside for recreational gold panning. Gold pans and hand tools may be used, but not mechanized equipment. No permit is required. From Highway 69 four miles east of Prescott, turn south on Walker Road (FS 197). The Lynx Lake turn off is approximately 3 miles on the left.

www.fs.fed.us/r3/prescott/recreate/rec_mine.htm

MINERAL AND MINING MUSEUMS

Apache Junction

Superstition Mountain Lost Dutchman Museum. Includes exhibits on the geology of the area, military history, mining artifacts from the town of Goldfield, and, of course, an exhibit on Jacob Waltz and the Lost Dutchman Mine. Admission fee. Open daily 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. Located at Goldfield Ghost town, 4 miles northeast of Apache Junction on the Apache Trail (State Route 88). 480-983-8888.

<http://www.superstitionmountainmuseum.org/>

Bisbee

Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum

Displays on mining and life in this mining town at the turn of the century. Admission fee. 10:00 am - 4:00 pm daily. 5 Copper Queen Plaza, Bisbee, AZ 85603. 520 432-7071

<http://www.bisbeemuseum.org/>

Flagstaff

Museum of Northern Arizona

A museum of the history and culture of the Colorado Plateau, displays include geologic models, fossils, and mineral specimens. Located three miles north of Flagstaff on U.S. Highway 180, Admission fee. Open daily 9 am - 5 pm, except Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day, 928-774-5213 www.musnaz.org

Phoenix

Arizona Mining and Mineral Museum

Over 3,000 minerals on exhibit; highlighting the collection are the colorful minerals from Arizona's copper mines. Exhibits on the lapidary arts, Arizona specimen localities, and fluorescent minerals. Open weekdays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and on Saturdays from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm, closed Sundays and State holidays. Admission fee: \$2 for adults, children free. 1502 West Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-255-3795. www.admmr.state.az.us/musgen.htm

Tempe

Arizona State University

Robert S. Dietz Museum of Geology

Includes mineral displays as well as vertebrate fossils, a Foucault pendulum, and a working seismograph. Free admission. Located in the Physical Sciences Complex, F-Wing, Monday through Friday, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon, 480-965-7065 <http://www.asu.edu/museums/ns/dietz.htm>

Tucson

Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum

This world-renown zoo and botanical garden also features a faux limestone cave, an exceptional collection of regional minerals, fossils, and geology exhibits. Admission fee. Located west of Tucson. 2021 N. Kinney Road, Tucson, March - September: 7:30 am - 5:00 pm. October - February: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm. June-September open until 10:00 pm on Saturday nights. 520-883-1380

www.desertmuseum.org

Tucson

University of Arizona Mineral Museum

Over 1900 minerals on display as well as an additional 6,000+ micro mount specimens. Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, by appointment only until August 2006 because of renovation of the Science Center. Admission fee. Located on the north east corner of University Boulevard and Cherry Avenue, on the University of Arizona campus in the Flandrau Science Center, 520-621-4227

www.geo.arizona.edu/minmus/main.htm

Tucson

Asarco Mineral Discovery Center

Exhibits illustrate the deposition, extraction, and uses of copper. Hands-on exhibits, video theater, cactus garden, picnic area. Free admission.

15 mi. south of Tucson on I-19 and Pima Mine Road, 520-625-7513

<http://www.mineraldiscovery.com/>

SUGGESTED READING

Gem Trails of Arizona by James Mitchell, Gem Guides Book Co., Baldwin Park, CA, 1995.

Geology of Arizona, 2nd Edition by Nations and Stump. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Dubuque, Iowa, 1992.

Gold Panning in Arizona by Diane Bain, Arizona Dept. of Mines and Mineral Resources, Phoenix, Arizona, 1990.

Mineralogy of Arizona by Anthony, Williams, Bideaux, & Grant, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1995.

Minerals of Arizona by Neil Bearce, Geoscience Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1999

Placer Gold Deposits of Arizona by Maureen Johnson. The US Geological Survey's Bulletin 1355 reprinted by Del Oeste Press, Tarzana, California, 1987.

Roadside Geology of Arizona by Halka Chronic, Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1983.

Rockhounding Arizona by Gerry Blair, Falcon Publishing, Inc., Helena, Montana, 1992.

Western Gem Hunters Atlas by Cy Johnson & Son, Susanville, CA, 1994.

PUBLIC CAVES

Colossal Cave National Park

P.O. Box 70 - 16711 E. Colossal Cave Road
Vail, AZ 85641 - 520.647.PARK (7275)

<http://www.colossalcave.com/welcome.html>

Directions:

From east Broadway, turn south onto scenic Old Spanish Trail and follow it about 17 miles to Colossal Cave Mountain Park.

Or, take I-10 east from Tucson to exit 279 (the Vail Exit), turn north, and follow the signs for about 7 miles.

Coronado Cave

Coronado National Memorial
4101 East Montezuma Canyon Road
Hereford, AZ 85615
(520) 366-5515

<http://nps.gov/coro>

Coronado cave is located 0.75 miles from the visitor center at the memorial. A free permit must be obtained at the visitor center before hiking to the cave. The cave is approximately 600 feet in length, 20 feet high, and 70 feet wide with several crawl ways and passages, none of which is very extensive. Allow two hours for a leisurely, round trip hike and cave visit. Bring water and two flashlights per person.

Fees: free permit from Visitor Center

From Tucson take I-10 east and exit south on Hwy. 90 to Sierra Vista, then south on Hwy 92 to S. Coronado Memorial Drive. Follow this road 5 miles to the Visitor Center.

Grand Canyon Caverns

PO BOX 180
Peach Springs, AZ 86434
520-422-3223/3224

<http://www.desertusa.com/mag99/feb/stories/gccaverns.html>

Directions:

The caverns are west of Flagstaff on old Route 66. From Seligman, exit Interstate 40 and take Rt. 66 about 25 miles northwest to the Grand Canyon Caverns exit.

Kartchner Caverns State Park

P.O. Box 1849

Benson, Arizona 85602

Information (520) 586-4100

www.pr.state.az.us/parkhtml/kartchner.html

Reservations (520) 586-CAVE (2283)

Directions:

Kartchner Caverns State Park is near Benson, Arizona, approximately 60 miles southeast of Tucson. From I-10 in Tucson, drive east 50 miles to State 90 (exit 302). Drive south for 9 miles to the park entrance.

The park is located nine miles south of I-10, off State Hwy 90, exit 302.